

Dissident Says US Political Repression Still Lives

By Frank A. Ankofer

Journal Washington Bureau

Washington, D.C. — "You get on the soapbox and they start taking the nails out."

That is the way Harvey Kahn, a former Milwaukeean and editor of The Public Eye, describes what he believes is a continued pattern of repression of political dissidents in the United States.

The Public Eye is a new magazine published by a research organization called the Repression Information Project. Three of its five staff members, including Kahn, attended the University of Wisconsin — Madison.

The others are William T. Steiner, 26, of West Bend, whose father, William J. Steiner, is wire editor of The West Bend News, and Mark Rytern, 26, of Newton, Mass., who attended UW from 1969 to 1971.

Kahn, 27, was formerly involved in an organization called The Fifth Estate,

which published Counterspy, a quarterly magazine. The organization received worldwide publicity in late 1973 when it published the names of CIA agents abroad.

The CIA station chief in Athens, Richard S. Welch, was later shot to death outside his home, and US officials said they believed the publication of his name was partly responsible for his assassination.

Kahn left Counterspy in June, 1976, mostly because he was more interested in domestic repression. Counterspy later folded.

With money from liberals and what Kahn describes as change oriented foundations, he produced a critique of the National Caucus of Labor Committees, also known as the United States Labor Party.

That effort led to his organizing the Repression Information Project, the purpose of which is to research

and write about domestic political repression. The vehicle is The Public Eye. The current issue had a printing of about 7,000 copies.

More Sophisticated

Kahn, who attended John Marshall High School in Milwaukee and graduated from UW in 1974, says political repression is still widespread, although he says it has become less overt and more sophisticated.

For example, he says some companies have instituted so-called workplace training programs to encourage conformity among workers and break up unions.

Kahn also is convinced that the FBI's Cointelpro operation, which was aimed at disrupting political dissidents, is still going on, in spite of denials by the FBI and the Justice Department.

"The activities are, as their memos say, continuing on an individual basis," Kahn said in an interview.

"I'm not a conspiracy type," he said, "but the apparatus exists. And it exists in local and state police intelligence units, which do intelligence gathering, wiretapping and break-ins."

Offers No Proof

Kahn said he was particularly concerned about repression of people in black and Latin communities. He believes these are the targets of local police, the FBI, Treasury agents and immigration and naturalization officials.

Asked if he could prove any of his assertions, Kahn said he could not, "to the standards of the press." But he said he and other members of the Repression Information Project heard enough stories to know it was going on.

"We're trying to fight against the re-emergence of such an era as the McCarthyism of the 1950s," he said. "There's always that